



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Emergency Food Assistance Program

Closeout Report for State Fiscal Year 2015

• Executive Summary •

Each year, WSDA Food Assistance Programs collects information from food pantries, including tribal food pantries and voucher programs, to develop an overview of statewide trends in the emergency food system. This allows WSDA to develop key partnerships and data-driven strategies to reduce hunger in our state.

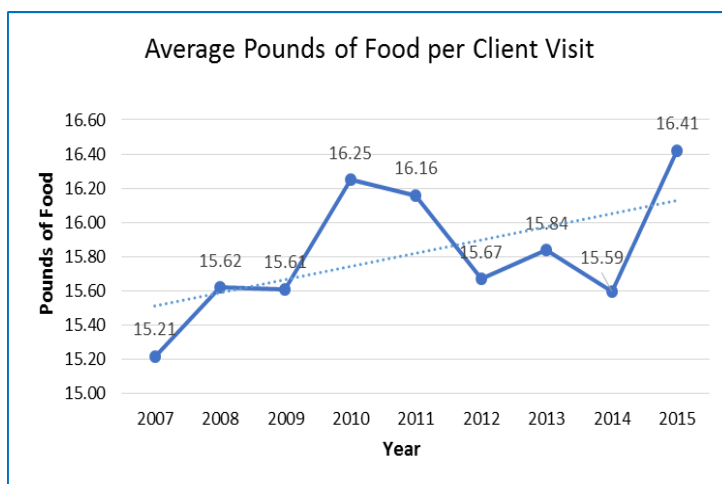
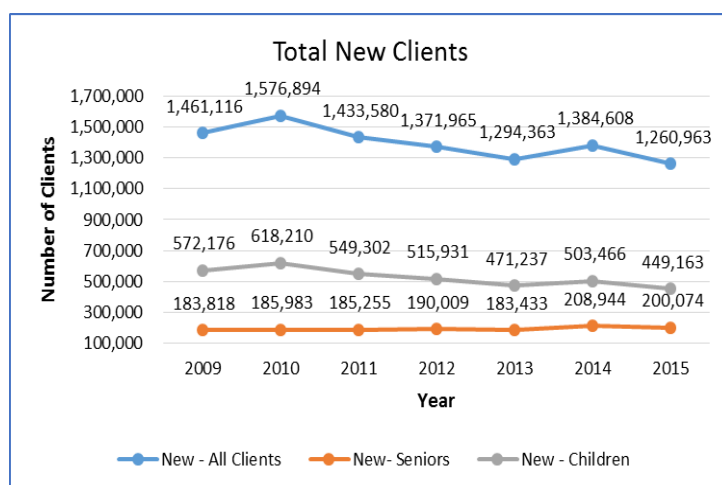
1 in 6 Washingtonians used the services of their local food pantry in 2015.

Food pantries provided a pound of food for an average cost of about \$0.33 in FY15, but its true cost is valued at closer to \$1.66. This means that for every \$1 going into the emergency food system, \$5 goes back to the community in the form of food to low-income families. This benefit is the direct result of an incredibly dedicated emergency food provider network working together with engaged community partners.

In FY15, there were 8.48 million client visits to emergency food providers. This was a drop by nearly ½ million total visits from the previous year, the first significant decrease in 8 years. Despite the overall decrease in visits, seniors saw an increase of 2.07% compared to 2014, suggesting seniors are struggling more than others.

In FY15, food pantries experienced a 8.93% decrease in new clients, 1.26 million from 1.38 million in FY14, and a smaller decrease of 4.50% in returning clients, 7.22 million from 7.56 million in FY14. This resulted in fewer new clients needing food, but returning clients needing it more often than the previous year, averaging 6.73 visits per year in FY15 compared to 6.46 visits per year in FY14. In fact, this is the highest number of average visits per year ever recorded.

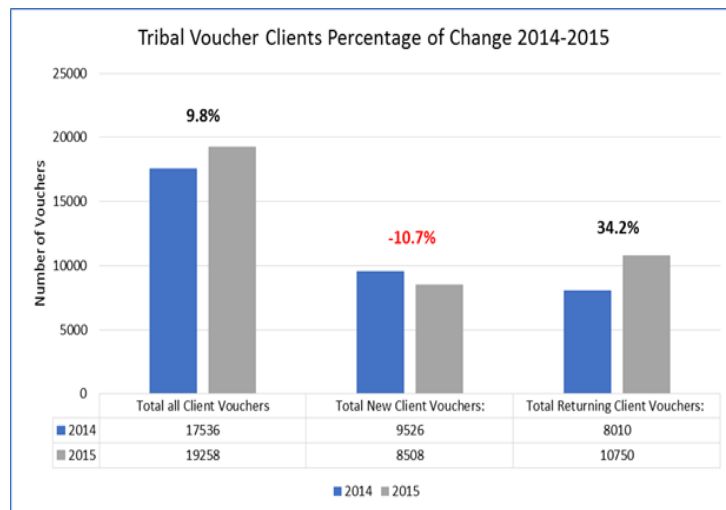
Seniors were the only age group that actually saw an increase in returning clients, up 2.89% from the previous year. They also saw a much smaller decrease of new senior visits than adults and children, just 4.24%. Seniors averaged 9.24 visits per year, significantly higher than any other age group. The number of new and returning children went down by 10.78% and 7.06% respectively, compared to FY14. They averaged 6.44 visits per year, up slightly from 6.22 per year in FY14. Adult saw decreases of 9% in new and 6.04% in returning clients and averaged 6.11 visits per year, up from 5.95 the previous year. This deeper need over the past few years for those still having to use food pantries, especially seniors, is a troublesome trend.



Food pantries continued to distribute the same number of pounds of food as in 2014, 139 million pounds, but because there were fewer visits, clients received almost a pound more of food per visit than last year. It is probably safe to say that if the Emergency Food Assistance Program had not received an additional \$800,000 in FY15, fewer pounds of food would have been procured and distributed to clients. Converting the previously mentioned \$.33 per pound, EFAP recipient agencies might have procured up to 2.42 million fewer pounds of food without that essential state funding.

Tribes provided food vouchers to 8,508 new clients, down 10.68% from FY14. Conversely, there was an enormous increase of 34.20% in returning clients, from 8,010 in FY14 to 10,750 in FY15. The number of visits also increased significantly by 9.81% to 19,258. The increases in voucher services are likely a combination of increased need by those still needing vouchers and an increase of \$31,000 tribes received for their voucher programs.

Several tribes use their EFAP funding for their food pantry activities. Their new clients increased by 44.30% and their returning clients by just 3.86%, opposite of the trend seen in non-tribal food pantries.



The WSDA Food Assistance Programs key projects over the next year include a focus on increasing the availability of healthier foods, capacity assessments, farm to food pantry pilot programs, and collaborations with private and public sector partners.

To see the full report: agr.wa.gov/FoodProg/

Food Safety & Consumer Services Division

*Defending the safety, integrity,
and availability of our food system.*

For more information:

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